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TWO LETTERS,

ON

THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY,

FROM

THE PRESBYTERY OF CHILLICOTHE,

TO THE

CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE.

HILLSBOROUGH:

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EXTRACTS

From the Minutes of the Presbytery of Chillicothe, sitting at West Union September 30, 1329.

"Messrs. Gilliland and Crothers were appointed a committee to prepare a pastoral letter to the churches under our care, on the subject of SLAVERY, and report at the spring meeting of Presbytery.

JAN. 6, 1830.

"The committee appointed to prepare a Pastoral Letter to the churches under our care, on the subject of Slavery, reported two forms of Letters, both of which were adopted; and it was resolved that they be published together, and that 1800 copies be printed."

(An extract.)

SAMUEL D. BLYTHE—*Stated Clerk.*

A PASTORAL LETTER

FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF CHILLICOTHE TO THE CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE.

Dear Brethren:

In our last letter, addressed to you, on the subject of entire abstinence from the use of Ardent Spirits, except as a medicine; we remarked, that much light had been thrown on the subject, within the last 25 years, so that we needed not, now, to offer any arguments to prove, that much would be gained, and nothing lost, by pursuing the course we recommended. We rejoice that the light is daily increasing, and shines brighter and brighter, on every part of our land, by means of sermons, essays and public addresses. We rejoice too, in the rapid increase of Temperance Societies, throughout our country, the efforts they are making, and the success which a merciful God is affording. To every ray of light on this subject, we pray that your eyes and your hearts may be open, and that you may not be behind your brethren, in any part of the world, in prudent and zealous efforts to banish from the earth, that destroyer of men.

Hitherto, we have been chiefly roused to action, in this great enterprise, by a view of the many dreadful evils occasioned by Intemperance, in our guilty world: but the time is now come, when we should be still more stimulated by the success already obtained, and a joyful anticipation of the future. Only let the cause of Temperance go on in its march, for fifty years, as it has done for two or three years past, and think brethren, think soberly, what will be the happy results. Let your minds, by way of anticipation, visit our Penitentiaries, and what do you see? Ancient monuments of the folly of men, in making use of Ardent Spirits, as a common beverage; once the abodes of thousands, with, now, probably not one hundred inhabitants. Look into our common Jails, formerly crowded with wretched criminals; and what do you now find? Only here and there, a solitary individual; without a companion to encourage his perseverance in crime; a drunken desperado to break open his prison doors; or a single individual to hand him through

the grate, a potion of strong drink, to drown his sorrow. Go now to the court of justice, and what do you see? A grave bench, a sober bar, consisting of two or three well qualified Attorneys, a sober and intelligent Jury; and all the business performed in less than half the time formerly occupied in litigation, purely the fruits of intemperance. Now visit the poor house, and what do you find? Nothing but an old decayed building without a single inhabitant; except where it may have been converted into private property, and become the abode of some happy family. Now take your journey thro' the whole length and breadth of the land, you see no drunkard sleeping by the way side; you meet no squalid beggar, who has spent his last shilling in the Tavern. Your ears are not offended with the bawling and profanity of drunken horsemen coming out from the place where the deadly poison is sold by the gill, or the half-pint. Look at the fields, once the property of intemperate men, grown over with thorns and thistles, and the fences broken down: now see them enclosed and covered with waving crops of corn. Enter the dwellings, once the abodes of poverty and wretchedness, and see them converted into comfortable mansions, inhabited by kind and hospitable parents, surrounded by smiling and well clothed children. Now take up your lodging for the night, in the Inn prepared for the reception of the weary traveller, and if you please, let it be the evening of Saturday; where is the place once called the bar, and which used to be surrounded with noise and filth, especially on this evening of the week? It is gone, and the whole apartment is converted into a comfortable room, where you may sit, and talk, and eat, and pray, and sleep, without molestation from the noise and foolery of the drunkard. Now, on the holy Sabbath, turn your feet to the house of God, and what do you discover there? There you see the descendants of the men who used to spend the Sabbath in the tippling shops, or doze them away upon their beds, after a night spent in debauchery, and a few of those very men themselves, sitting under the sound of the gospel, *clothed and in their right mind*, all *waiting to hear what God the Lord will say unto their souls*. Now look into the records of the church lately made, and compare them with those made in the eighteenth century, or even in the beginning of the present one, and behold the contrast. Now you read not a single line like this: (such an one is convicted of intemperance in the use of ardent spirits, and is therefore suspended from the communion

of the church, until he give satisfactory evidence of repentance.) Wheresoevr you turn your eyes, you see the result of the change, is agreat increase of the wealth and comfort of the human family. We are confident, brethren, we have not painted too high; and we hope your own minds will much enlarge the picture.

Now, with such a prospect before us, where is the christian, where is the lover of his country, who will refuse to lend his aid, and exert his influence, to bring about the glorious change; whoever may refuse, we pray, dear brethren, that none of you may be found among the unhappy number.

But we wish, now, to address you on another subject, which we deem to be of great importance; we mean the subject of Slavery, as practised in these United States; and, as you very well know, by many who profess to be the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. On this subject, as on the former, much light has also been cast, within the last fifty years. At the close of the Revolutionary War, many of the people of the United States were entirely ignorant of the the way in which their slaves were procured in Africa: they knew nothing of the horrors of the middle passage; and some even doubted whether the Negroes were human beings. When the rights of men began to be much talked of in America; and a few bold spirits stood forth, to assert the rights of black men: among those who acknowledged them to be men, there were found some, who professed to believe, that they were the seed of Cain; that the colour of their skin, was the mark set on that unhappy man, and that therefore, they were lawful slaves: forgetting that Cain never was doomed to slavery, and that if he had, his posterity were all destroyed by the flood. Others said, they were the posterity of Canaan; and were, by a prophetic curse doomed to perpetual slavery: forgetting that God had, long since, inflicted that curse in the land of Canaan. Some plead the example of Abraham as authority for holding slaves, not considering that we have no evidence of Abraham's servants being slaves, more than the subjects of any other humane prince, or Patriarch. Some even ventured to plead the silence of our Saviour, on the subject; and the exhortations of the Apostles, to masters and servants, as authority for holding the Africans in slavery: not discerning, that the precepts delivered by our Saviour, and his Apostles, would, if universally observed, forever abolish all involuntary slavery of men, who have not forfeited their right to liberty.

But those days of darkness are, in a good degree, past and gone; and we hope gone forever. It is now generally acknowledged, and that too by many slave-holders themselves; that the slavery of the Africans, in America, is a national sin: that they are men, that they have the same natural rights as other men; and that their treatment, both as it respects the manner of procuring them, and the bondage in which they are held, is more cruel than that of the Israelites in Egypt; or even that of the captives held to slavery, in the Roman Empire. To prove these points, therefore, is no part of our design. You, brethren, in your imagination, have almost beheld the towns of Africa in flames; for the purpose of kidnapping and enslaving unoffending freemen. You have read, or heard of the horrors of their transportation to America, till the blood has almost curdled in your veins. You have seen them exposed to sale, like beasts, in the market: husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, separated and torn from each other, by the hands of avaricious and cruel tyrants, never more to meet on this side of the grave. You have seen them again, in their state of separation, with thousands and tens of thousands, of their descendants, dragging out a miserable life of bondage, under the hand of cruel masters, and mistresses, and taskmasters; without one gleam of hope, that they shall ever be delivered, but by death. You have seen their miserable huts,—their tattered garments,—their coarse and scanty food,—their downcast eyes, too far consumed with grief to shed a tear;—and at their sighs, and groans, and bitter cries, under the lash, your hearts have sickened and turned away. Some of you too, like Lot, making his escape from Sodom, have fled from those parts of the land, where such cruelties are practised, that your eyes and ears might no longer be offended, with such enormities: that your children might be preserved from the infection; and that you and they might escape the vengeance of him who has said: *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy will I arise: I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.* In thus taking your flight, brethren, we think you have done wisely. It was a duty you owed to yourselves; but, especially, to your dear children.

But let us not imagine, that because we have got beyond the sound of the slaveholder's lash, and the black man's cries, that we have done all that is our duty to do; and have

no more concern in this tragical scene. The practice of slavery is still continued, with but little mitigation of its horrors; and the number of slaves, and slaveholders is, from year to year, increasing; an awful evidence, among many others, that mere natural light will not make the hearts of men better: and we still make a part of the guilty nation, whose hands are defiled with the blood of Africa; and which, without repentance and reformation, cannot escape the judgments of Heaven. How then can we suppose; or how dare any one tell us, that this is a matter with which we have no business? Surely, if we have one spark of love to God; any love to our country; any compassion for the poor slaves; any love to their masters; any love to ourselves, or any concern for nations yet unborn; we ought to exert our influence, in the use of all lawful and prudent means, to put a stop to the horrid traffic; and, if possible, yet to save our country, from impending ruin.

But you will, probably, ask: *What should we do?* or *What can we do more than to keep our own hands clear of the odious practice?* This is a very important inquiry; and one, which we readily acknowledge, is attended with some difficulty: yet it is one from which no christian ought to shrink. The case is one of those almost desperate ones.—The practice of slavery has been so long continued: the slaves have become so numerous; their character so degraded; their masters, and their masters' children so accustomed to living by the labour of the slaves: the laws of the slave states so unfavorable to emancipation; the feelings of humanity so blunted, and the minds of many so impatient of any thing like reproof, on this subject; that we have indeed reason to fear, that our destruction is determined, and is near at hand.

Yet, while the Lord delays his judgments: while he is raising up a few in almost every part of the land, to plead the cause of the oppressed: while we, every year, hear of a few slave-holders repenting and emancipating their slaves; there is a gleam of hope, breaking through the dark cloud, that the Lord may yet, in infinite mercy, spare us; and put it into the hearts of oppressors, *to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke.* But be this as it may; while the Lord is waiting to be gracious, and is calling us to repentance, he requires

his people *to stand in the gap*, to act as *intercessors*, and to be diligent in the discharge of every duty, tending to save from ruin, their country, and the church of the living God. And now, brethren, the chief object we have in view, at present, is to present to your minds, a few of the leading duties, which we believe to be incumbent on us in the present crisis; &c.

1. Let us begin at home—Let us *first cast the beam out of our own eye*, before we attempt to cast, either a *beam* or a *mote*, out of a brother's eye. Let us duly consider the part we may have taken, in the affliction of the oppressed Africans. Have not some of us, even bought and sold, the bodies and souls of these unhappy men? Or have we not insulted and abused some of them, treating them with scorn and contempt, while held in bondage, either as our own property, or the property of our fathers and neighbors? Or have we not encouraged the shameful traffick, by conniving at it, or talking of it as though it were an innocent thing; or at least, as if it were a thing of no great moment? O! how offensive must these things be to that God, who has said: *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;* and, *He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker;* and to that Saviour who says: *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets?* If, then, in any of these ways, or other similar ways, we have contributed to swell the enormous stock of national guilt; let us not attempt to cover our sin: but let us humbly confess it to God, imploring his pardon, through the blood of atonement.

2. In the providence of God, a number of poor, and almost friendless, black people, have been led to seek a residence among us; toward whom we are bound to act a just and friendly part. These people, generally, have either been brought hither by their former masters, for the sake of emancipating them; or have been manumitted in slave states, where the laws of the land would not permit them to remain, but in a state of bondage. To us they have fled for refuge: not that they expect much from us; but that, under a milder constitution, they may enjoy a small share of that liberty which every man desires: at least so much, as not to be bought and sold like beasts. As might be expected; they are generally poor, and illiterate; and therefore not a very desirable kind of citizens. It seems, too, to be very unfair, in those who

have enjoyed the fruits of their labour, and reduced them to their present state of degradation, now, to cast them off, and throw them on us for protection. But are these sufficient reasons why we should refuse them a residence among us: or refuse to aid them, in rising to a more respectable standing, in society? To mere politicians, they may seem so; but, surely, to the man, who takes his rules of conduct from the bible, and is under the influence of religious feeling, they must appear in a very different point of light. We are sorry to learn, that many of our fellow citizens are disposed, either to force these poor people back into a state of bondage, or oblige them to fly into foreign climes; where, few of them have either ability or inclination to go. But, dear brethren, we would fondly hope, that none of you will give the least countenance to such a measure. If you would, we ask: Where is your *pity for the poor?* Where is your *love to your neighbour?* Where is that *charity which endureth all things?* From the knowledge you have of your Saviour's life, when he was on the earth; and of the precepts which he delivered to his disciples; how do you think he would have treated these poor black people? Would he have denied them the benefit of an education, in a common school? Would he have given encouragement to the plan, of forcing them back into a state of slavery? You feel as if the very thought were blasphemy. Then, *let the same mind be in you that was in him; and walk as he walked.* He says, *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* He promises to bless those *who deal their bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to their houses.* These people are poor, and they are outcasts. Then plead their cause; and while they behave as well as other poor and ignorant people, suffer them to reside quietly among you, until they can find a better asylum; and as you may have opportunity, assist them to rise from their present degraded state. Remember that, for aught you know, you, or your children, may, one day, be placed in similar circumstances. If you should, how would you wish to be treated, by those among whom your lot might be cast? The answer is easy. Then, *whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.*

3. We have said, that we make part of a nation, whose hands are defiled with blood; but must now say, that we belong to a church, too, in whose *skirts*, and on whose *fin-*

gers, a large portion of that blood will be found, in the day, when the *Lord maketh inquisition for blood.* It is a lamentable fact, and one that cannot be denied, that from the commencement of the African slave trade, until the present time, professed christians have had a large share in carrying on the horrid traffic; and even now, hundreds and thousands of slaves are bought and sold, and held in bondage, by professors of religion of various christian denominations. And we apprehend there is little risk in saying, that this one circumstance, has contributed more to encourage and extend the practice of slavery, than any other; or, perhaps, than all others beside. Had the church kept her hands clear of this bloody crime, it is probable, nay, it is almost certain, that slavery in these United States would have been long ago abolished. The influence of the church in the world, has always been great, and will be so till the end of time; this is the decree of heaven. But this influence must always be salutary or injurious, according to the purity or impurity of the church, in her doctrines and practice, but especially in her practice. They who would prevent her influence, must destroy her, which earth and hell can never do. They who wish her to exert a bad influence, must corrupt her. They who wish her to have a salutary influence, must purify and reform her; and if you wish to reform the nation or the world, from any sin, which the church has permitted or encouraged in her members, you must begin with the church.

We see, therefore, how important it is, that the church in this country, should arise from her slumbers, and endeavour to purge herself from the sin of slavery. We see also, how this is to be accomplished. It is not merely by preaching, and writing, and talking; but to these must be joined the faithful and prudent exercise of the church discipline. The church may send forth her ten thousand heralds, to cry against slavery, or any other sin; yet if it is known all the world over, that she uniformly receives into her communion, persons notoriously guilty of that very sin, and continues them in it, without censure, her preaching will have very little effect; except it be to scandalize herself, and prejudice sinners against her religion. We therefore conclude, that it is the duty of all churches, and church courts, to exclude from their communion, all those who continue to buy, sell, or

hold slaves for the sake of gain, when convicted of the same. But here we are met by a host of questions and objections, which we shall endeavour fairly to answer.

Probably the first question that will be asked, is: *why put in the limiting clause,—for the sake of gain?* We answer, because in the present state of affairs, we can conceive of a few cases in which men may buy or hold slaves, from motives of humanity; and we know not but a case might occur, in which a man might sell one from the same motives, although we think it very doubtful; and we should be as unwilling to exclude from the communion of saints, the benevolent, and humane, as to receive the covetous, and unmerciful. Our meaning will be made plain, by stating one or two cases. A benevolent man, who abhors the practice of slavery, may buy a slave, purely for the sake of emancipating him. Another, who is not rich, may, at the request of a slave, purchase him from a cruel master; on condition that the slave will refund the price in service, or otherwise. Another who has by inheritance from his father, or in some other way, become possessed of a number of slaves, may continue to hold them, not because he wishes to make a gain of them, or is really profited by them, but merely because they are unable to provide for themselves, and unwilling to go from him. Now, to meet these and other similar cases, which may exist, or occur, we use the limiting clause.

But here it will be objected, that this limitation will render the rule difficult of application, and afford to hypocritical slave dealers an opportunity of deceiving the church, by pleading excuses for their conduct, which have no real existence. This we readily admit, but it cannot be helped; nor is it any reason, why the exception should not be made. This same difficulty attends the application of many other rules; yea, almost all rules have their exceptions. As for instance, it is said, in the law of the Lord, '*The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work.* Yet our Saviour, who is Lord of the Sabbath, has clearly taught us, that works of necessity and mercy are excepted; and we in our confession of faith and catechisms, have recognized the exception, and all our church courts act on that principle. Now when the Saviour vindicated the conduct of his hungry disciples, in rubbing and eating the ears of corn, on the Sabbath day; when he admitted the lawfulness of *leading an ox*

or an ass to watering; and of pulling a sheep out of a pit, into which he had fallen, on the Sabbath; he knew perfectly that these exceptions would be abused; that many would plead necessity, or mercy, for profaning the Sabbath, when no such motives for their conduct existed; and that in this way, much difficulty would arise in the exercise of the church discipline, and many guilty persons would escape deserved censure; yet he did not on that account, conceal the truth; neither should we in the case before us, although we have no doubt, it will be abused. The church, like every thing else, in this world, is in an imperfect state; nor is it the design of the Saviour, that a perfect separation should be made between the *tares* and the *wheat*, until the day of judgment. *Let both grow together nntil the harvest.* Yet this is no reason why the church should not bear a public testimony against all sin, by eqcluding from her communion, such as are notoriously guilty of trampling on the divine law. Besides, we are not of opinion that the exercise of discipline, according to the rule proposed, would be attended with so much difficulty as some people imagine. The nature of slavery is such, that when men deal in slaves, from pure principles of humanity, it is generally done in such a way, and under such circumstances, that the principle is manifest to all their acquaintances; and on the other hand, when it is done merely for the sake of gain, it would generally be difficult to invent even a plausible excuse. Moreover, dealing in slaves, in its very best form, has so much of the appearance of evil, that it is to be presumed, that every honest man who had any thing to do in it, will even court a fair investigation of his conduct.

Here we are met by another objection, which, we hope, is not made by very many in the present day: yet is still in the mouths of a few. It is said; that *to make slavery a term of communion, would be to interfere with civil government, and with the civil rights of men.* This objection has no foundation in fact. No civil government, of which we have any knowledge, enjoins it on men to hold slaves; and if any one should, it would be a loud call to every citizen, to say, with the Apostles: *Whether we should obey God rather than men, judge ye.* So far is our general government from any thing of the kind, that she prohibits the importation of slaves, under the highest penalty. Many of the states too prohibit the

importation of slaves, for sale; while they all permit their exportation. It is evident therefore, that, in our country, no one is required, by law, to buy, sell, or hold slaves: but is merely permitted so to do if he pleases. Neither is any one compelled, by law, to be a member of a church: but is merely permitted, in that matter also to do as he pleases. Suppose then that the church should exclude, from her communion, all slave-holders; how would this interfere, either with the rights of the citizens, or with the law, which protects him in the enjoyment of those rights? In no way. The church merely gives the man his choice, whether he will belong to her communion,or be a slave-holder. If he choose the latter, she leaves him at perfect liberty to enjoy his slaves as peaceably as he can; without, in the least, depriving him of the protection of civil government. These remarks are applicable to every other case, in which any practice is permitted by civil government; while the church makes it a term of communion. They are applicable to intemperance, attending the theatre, attending balls, buying lottery tickets, &c. And should the civil government sanction duelling, or piracy; the church by excluding the duellist, or pirate from her communion, would deprive him of no civil right; or, in the least, interfere with civil government.

But we must now meet an objection, which professes to be drawn from the Bible. For strange and paradoxical as it may seem; although but few men will, now, pretend to prove from the scriptures that slavery is not a sin: yet many pretend to find evidence there, that it is a privileged kind of sin, against which the ministers of the gospel should say nothing; and of which, church judicatories have no right to take cognizance. Hear the argument. *We ought to follow the example of the Apostles. Slavery existed, in their days. They said nothing against it; and did not make it a term of communion.* Now were we to admit the truth of every proposition in this argument, we would be obliged, either to give up the point; or to show that slavery, in the days of the Apostles, was a very different thing from what it now is: but so it happens, that we are under no necessity of doing either the one or the other. Let us then examine the argument, and allow it all its weight.

That Apostolick example is decisive, in this case, as in every other, we cheerfully admit. That slavery existed in

the world, in the time of the Apostles, we also admit. But, that they said nothing against it; or that it existed in the christian church, we cannot admit. Let it be proved that only one of the Apostles was a slave-holder; and we will drop our pen. Let it be shown that they said nothing against slavery; and we will be silent, on that subject. Let it be made appear, that they admitted to the communion of the church, slaveh-olders, continuing such, and we will give up the point. But we believe that none of these things can be proved; and that to assert either of them, is a gross slander, on the Apostles, and their religion. If the Apostles did not preach against slavery, surely they were the most unfaithful men that ever lived. Hear their commission. "That repentance and remission of sins, should be preached to all nations." And again; "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. Now, the Saviour had commanded them "to love their neighbour as themselves: to do to others, as they would that others should do to them:" to keep at the greatest distance from any thing like tyranny or despotism; and what they had heard "in the ear, in closets, to proclaim upon the house tops." Now, with such a commission before them; and such commands sounding in their ears; how would they be faithful and say nothing against slavery? Were these men cowards?—Were they men pleasers? Did they shun their duty, to keep friends with all parties? We have not much of their sermons; neither has the objector: but let him read their commissions again:—let him read the character, given of them in the acts of the Apostles:—let him read those scraps of their sermons which are there recorded:—let him listen to one of them while he says boldly, in the presence of those who had been, for three years, his constant hearers: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God:" and again; "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ:" and then, let him say, if he can, that the Apostles did not preach against every sin, slavery not excepted.

Again, if the Apostles did not preach against slavery; surely their sermons must have been very inconsistent with their writings. Read their epistles; addressed, not to the world, but to christian churches, and christian ministers, and christian people, scattered through different nations; and see if they do not condemn slavery. Do they not speak against

"covetousness, unrighteousness, unmercifulness, oppression, manstealing, a heart exercised with covetous practices, &c." Did not Paul say: "the covetous, and the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God?" Did he not write to the Corinthians: "If any one that is called a brother, be covetous, or an extortioner, to keep no company with him, no not so much as to eat?" And is all this saying nothing against slavery? If buying, and selling innocent, unoffending men; or holding them in bondage, purely for the sake of gain, be not unrighteous; and an evidence of a heart exercised with covetous practices, we would be glad to know what is; or what the Apostle could have meant. As well might we say that the Apostles said nothing against gambling, duelling, piracy or treason, as that they did not condemn slavery

Now we ask: Is it probable? Is it credible? Is it possible, that the Apostles, acting under the commission which they had received, and writing as they did, to the churches, which they planted and watered, would admit to the communion of those churches, men who continued to patronise slavery? To us, the thing appears utterly incredible. As soon would we believe, that they admitted the racers, and wrestlers, and pugillists, and gladiators, who contended in the olympick games. These were sanctioned by law; and they were condemned by the Apostles, no more than slavery, and in no other way. But we are told, that the Apostles, *in their addresses to the different characters composing the christian church; addressed masters and servants.* Very true, but what does this prove? Nothing; only that there were masters and servants in the church: and would not this have been the case, if there never had been a slave on earth? That some of those servants were slaves, we think not at all improbable: but that the masters were slave-holders, we have not a single intimation. The Apostle says nothing like it; and we do very much question, whether, in the Apostle's days, a slave-holder ever asked admission to the communion of a christian church.

Now, it will be asked: *was not Onesimus a slave; and Philemon a christian slave-holder?* We answer, no. It is plain that Onesimus was not a slave: but merely an indented, or hired servant. Had he been a slave, such as we hold in America; how could the Apostles, with any propriety, have said to Philemon: *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account, I will repay it?* The Apostle's suppo-

sition would have been absurd. Let us try the case, by a simple supposition; suppose a slave, in some of the neighboring slave states, were to runaway from his master, and come to one of you: after he had been with you a few days, you find out that he is a runaway slave: you persuade him to return; and by him, you write to the master, advising him to receive and forgive his returning servant; telling him, if the servant owes him any thing, and is either unable, or unwilling to pay him, he may charge you with it, and you will pay it. What would the master think? Surely he would conclude, in a moment, that you either intended to insult him; or were entirely ignorant of the nature of the relation subsisting between him and his servant.

How then, comes it to pass, that so many wise men, have got it into their heads; and are so very confident, that slavery did exist in the apostolick churches? The true reason, we believe, is this: they now see many slave-holders in the church; and when they hear ministers of the gospel, either from the pulpit, or the Lord's table, addressing masters and servants, they know that by masters, slave-holders are meant; and knowing too that slavery existed in the world, in the Apostles' days; they naturally conclude, that when the Apostles addressed masters and servants, they must have meant the same thing. Thus they are led completely to reverse the argument; and, instead of proving from apostolick example, what should be the practice of the church now: they in fact, reason from the present practice of the church, to what they suppose was the practice of the apostolick churches.

Now some one, and perhaps a whole church session will object, and say, "the General Assembly of our church have never decided, that dealing in slaves is a sin, requiring the cognizance of church judicatories, and therefore, it would be improper, in an inferior court, to take any notice of it." To this we answer, neither has any assembly, that we know of, decided that this sin should be exempt from the notice of the church courts. Moreover, had any assembly decided in either way, the very next assembly might give a directly opposite decision; and in neither case, would the decision be obligatory on the inferior court. According to the constitution of our church, the General Assembly have no power to add any article to it, or take one from it, without the consent of at least a majority of the Presbyteries. Now our form of

government no where pretends to specify all the particular sins of which church judicatories have a right to take cognizance, but leaves that matter just where it should, with every church court to decide for itself, by the word of God. See book of discipline, chap. 1. sec. 3, 4.

Now, is dealing in slaves, for the sake of worldly gain, a sin, clearly condemned by the word of God?—Does it give countenance and encouragement, to the most cruel and unrighteous traffick, that ever was carried on, in the world; and one which the civil governments, of almost all nations, and even the pope himself, are endeavoring to put a stop to? Is it *a covetous, unrighteous* and *unmerciful* practice? and do you not inflict church censure, on your members, for other sins, less scandalous, and less heinous, without any decision of the General Assembly about them? Why then wait for a decision of the assembly, in this case? You will say: *It is very desirable, that reformation, from an evil of so great extent, and so long continuance, should begin with the supreme Judicatory of the church.* Very true; but is this to be expected? surely not: especially in a church, whose highest court is composed of delegates, from the whole body. Almost every reformation, from any general corruption, has begun with a few; and it is to be expected, that this will always be the case. Had Luther waited for the glorious reformation from popery; till the pope and his cardinals had begun it; we, probably, had been, this day, either blind papists, or ignorant savages. Let us then do our duty, and look to God for his blessing.

Perhaps it will be said, by some: "We live in a free state; where slavery is prohibited by law and therefore have nothing to do with slave dealers." It is true, we cannot hold slaves, in our own state; and we would be thankful that it is so: but perhaps we may have more to do, in this matter, than some are ready to imagine. We know not how soon, some of us may be removed to slave states. It may be too, that some church-members, who come to reside among us, may have left their slaves behind them; to be sold; or to be hired out; or to work on their farms under overseers: while they live on the profits. Or there may even be some who have their money employed, in the odious slave trade, as it is, sometimes carried on from one slave state to another. Surely, brethren, we ought to let those men know, and to let the world know; that

such characters cannot be admitted to our communion: and if such a notice, should only save us from having any trouble with them, our labour would not be lost.

But we have one other objection, yet to answer: and although we fear, it is the very root of almost all the other difficulties, on this subject; our answer shall be a very short one. It is said: "If we attempt to make dealing in slaves a term of communion, we will create disturbance; and make a noise; and kindle a dreadful fire, in the church." We answer by asking a few plain questions, which every body can answer. Shall we neglect our duty, because some people will make a noise about it? Was ever a reformation from any general and deep rooted corruption effected, without exciting some opposition and disturbance? Did not Luther, and his little band of reformers, make a noise, and raise a smoke, and kindle a fire, in which hundreds and thousands lost their lives; and do not we all profess to bless God for their labours? Brethren, let us give no just cause of offence, to any one: but let us exercise ourselves, *to have a conscience void of offence, both toward God and man.*

JAMES GILLILAND.

THE

PRESBYTERY OF CHILLICOTHE,

TO THE CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE.

Dear Brethren:

As those who must shortly give account, we consider it our duty to address you, in regard to the following resolution, which, after mature deliberation, was passed unanimously at our meeting in September last: viz. Resolved, that buying or selling, or holding a slave, for the sake of gain, is a heinous sin and scandal, and requires the cognizance of the judicatories of the church. To one, who has but little acquaintance with our region, it would be natural to ask, what have the churches in Ohio to do with slavery? The assumption is, that in our land of freedom, there are no slave-holders. Yet, scarcely a year passes without application for privileges in the churches of Ohio, by persons more or less involved, in this sin. It is possible, that within our own bounds, there may be professors of religion living on farms which were bought with the price of human flesh and blood; and that there are others who derive a yearly revenue, from the hire of slaves left behind them in other states, in the hands of unprincipled men, who care neither for their souls, nor their bodies, provided they obtain from their labours, the worth of their hire. It is also well known, that unthinking persons are almost daily tempted by advertisements of large rewards, to seize, and restore slaves, who are escaping from bondage; notwithstanding the command, (Deut. 23. 15, 16.) in that law to which slave-holders themselves, sometimes appeal: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his Master, the servant which is escaped from his Master unto thee; he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of the gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him." It may be, there are among you, brethren, some who are guilty in these matters, and yet impenitent. If so, the sin of slave-holding is not only the sin of our land, and of our church; but it is *our* sin.

We wish to call your attention to three points embraced in the resolution. We say—

I. That buying or selling, or holding a slave, for the sake of gain, is a heinous sin. We say nothing about cases of involuntary and unavoidable slave-holding, if such do exist. We speak exclusively, of that which, whatever else may be pretended, is, in fact, the offspring of covetousness, or the love of gain. We consider it unnecessary to prove that it is a sin to rob a fellow man of that liberty, which men generally profess to hold dearer than life. On this subject, there is no diversity of sentiment among us. We hold it as a self evident truth, "that all men, by nature are, and of right ought to be, free." No one with whom we have intercourse either in the church, or out of it, is willing to be ranked with the enemies of universal liberty. Even the lordly owner of a hundred slaves, will tell you, that he "hates the principle" of slavery. Much as he delights in the practice of trading in the bodies and souls of men, and depriving them of their freedom; he hates the principle.

It is lamentable too, that those professors of religion who are most deeply immersed in the guilt of this sin, are often heard declaring, that they are conscientiously opposed to the "principle," and they are loud in their lamentations, that such an evil should prevail among us. But brethren, do you weigh the import of your own acknowledgment, that slave-holding is a sin? Do you realise that it is nothing more nor less than an acknowledgment, that it is a transgression of God's holy law; that it exposes to the wrath of a sin avenging God, and that there is no forgiveness of it, but through the atoning blood of the Saviour? It would be an alleviating circumstance, if we could believe that the slave-holder jeopardised no man's soul but his own. But it is otherwise.

His sin is,

II. A scandal in the scriptural sense of the word; it is a stumbling block to others. If by things harmless in themselves, such as eating meat offered to Idols, a christian might become chargeable with the blood of souls; much more may he cause others to stumble, by that which is, in itself, a transgression of God's law. It requires but a limited acquaintance with the world around us, to perceive that it is the example of christian slave-holders, which keeps the slave-holding world in countenance. They are compelled to draw the

inference, that either to trample on the rights of our neighbours, is consistent with the religion and example of Jesus, or that those professors who are doing so, are inconsistent with their profession, and they will sometimes draw one of these conclusions, and sometimes the other, just as they may find it convenient to quiet their own consciences, or give vent to their enmity against the cross of Christ. We say therefore, that,

III. This heinous sin and scandal requires the cognizance of the judicatories of the church We mean, that Ministers and church judicatories ought to deal with this, as with any other sins and scandals—by preaching and other means of instruction; or by the exercise of discipline; or whatever means the Saviour has given us, for the purpose, they are bound to bring the guilty to repentance, or exclude them from the communion of the church. That the church ought thus to take cognizance of every thing which is heinously sinful and scandalous, is an axiom in Theology, which no well informed christian pretends to deny. But still there are objections: for there are those who will claim the privilege of lording it over the rights of their fellow men. To be able to live in sin because they love it, and because they think it profitable, and yet to have nothing with which to sooth the conscience, and quiet their fears, appears to be exclusively, the attainment of Devils. There is one plea which we feel ourselves bound to answer, or be silent on this subject. We are told that slavery existed in the days of the Apostles—slavery of a very frightful kind—the Master had power over the life of the slave, and the Apostles prudently said nothing about it. That this sin did prevail extensively in the world, in their days, we believe. If we had no evidence of this in history, we should consider it probable, that men who under the influence of pagan despots were up in arms of rebellion against the Almighty, would of course be trampling on each other's rights. Men who hate their Maker, cannot love one another: but, that the Apostles said nothing about slavery, or, that it was tolerated in the church, is most untrue; and we feel ourselves bound to show that it is false. We cannot but remark, however, that it is painful to hear professed followers of Jesus, claiming kindred in their practice, with men, some of whom, were worshippers of Devils; and alleging a supposed silence of the Apostles, as a plea for living in that, which they themselves acknowl-

edge to be a sin. It is this plea of supposed Apostolick example, and silence, which has for ages, kept the consciences of slave-holders quiet; and sealed the lips of many Ministers on the subject, and in many parts of christendom, has rivited the chains of the poor African. In our remarks on this subject, let it be distinctly kept in view, we have not a word to say to Atheists, who deny the existence of any law of God, which forbids a man to deprive his neighbor of his rights; nor to reprobates, who deny that to trample on that law, is sin; nor to any man who refuses to be regulated by the Bible. Our concern is exclusively with those christians who acknowledge that slave-holding is a sin; but maintain, that owing to some peculiarity of circumstances, the Apostles said nothing about it, and therefore infer that we should say nothing.

We remark,

I. If it be true that the Apostles said nothing about slave-holding, that fact ought to put an end to all controversy about it. All *orthodox* christians maintain, that Apostolick example is just as obligatory, as Apostolick precept. It is by the example of the Apostles, and churches under their care, that we are taught many of the important truths and duties which we believe and practise every day. If it can be proved that they maintained an habitual silence on the point in question, that fact ought to seal the lips of every Minister and christian on the subject; and every one who would open his mouth against slavery, ought to be dealt with immediately, as a scandalous person.

II. To admit that slave-holding is a sin, and then maintain that the Apostles, from prudential motives, said nothing against it, is absurd in itself. It is just saying that they permitted their hearers to die unwarned in a damning sin: and to call this prudence, is only to give ministerial unfaithfulness a christian name. How did they come to say nothing about it, if they knew it to be a sin? Was the popish notion of venial sins so fashionable among them, that they considered it a matter of no consequence whether men repented of it or not? Or did they suppose that their hearers were naturally so prone to repent of this sin that it would be a matter of course; or did they suppose it would be time enough, when they would get to Heaven? We read in the New Testament, of their requiring of christians, to abandon things which were, in themselves, innocent, and to deny themselves of some important privile-

ges, from motives of prudence or expediency; and to say that they ever counted it imprudent to abandon sin, or to tell men to do so, is just as foolish as it is wicked. We care not what you tell us of the peculiarities of their situation: it is in the face of all peculiarities, that God has said: "Thou shalt in any wise reprove thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." And again, "When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." But what was there in their situation, so peculiar? The most imposing account of the matter is this: "In the time of the Apostles, slavery was every where, in Pagan countries, established by law—the rulers, and the great body of the people were slave-holders; and in order that christianity might obtain a footing and keep its ground, the Apostles prudently said nothing about holding slaves."

III. We consider this a gross slander on the Apostles, and the religion which they preached. No man of plain common sense, can look such a statement fairly in the face, without being confounded by its impiety and impudence. We know that the Jesuits undertook to convert idolators, by meeting them half-way. We know that Mahomet made proselytes, by putting polygamy and many abominable sins on the list of virtues. We know that pagans succeeded in propogating their systems, by accommodating them to the taste of adulterers and drunkards. But it was reserved for the advocates of slavery to tell us that even the Apostles succeeded, in propogating the religion of Jesus, by compromising with the lusts of slave-holders. Thus the Apostles must be put on a level with the vilest impostors; and the religion which is from above, must claim kindred with some of the worst systems on earth, and in one of their meanest features. But who does not know, that one of the distinguishing features of christianity, and one of her chief glories, is, and always has been, her pure, uncompromising spirit. Nothing so confounded infidels in the first ages of the christian church, as the fact, that a religion which frowns upon every impurity in man, and requires the absolute abandonment of every sin, should, in a few years, through the preaching of plain and honest fishermen, be able to number, among her sincere followers, almost whole provinces of those who were once the vilest of men. They were constrained to

acknowledge, that it was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in their eyes. But there is not so much mystery in the matter, if it be true that the Apostles bribed the world into friendship, by an undisturbed permission to make slaves of their neighbors.

Is it credible, that under a proper sense of responsibility to their Master, they should preach against every other sin, and yet habitually avoid telling any man that it was a sin to make a slave of his brother? Can we believe, that while they endeavoured, by the exercise of discipline, to banish every other sin from the church; the sin of buying and selling and holding their brethren in slavery, was permitted, like the "sacred bulls" among the worshippers of Juggernaut, to come and go as it pleased: and even when they found it in the church trampling on the hope of salvation, they would not disturb it, lest the powers of darkness should rise and drive them out of their coasts? We have heard of pagans, who sometimes worshipped the Devil, merely to keep him quiet. But that the Apostles kept the enemies of the cross quiet, by tenderness towards their favorite sin, is a slander, which for originality and malignity, has no parallel.

We appeal to the whole history of the Apostles—to their behaviour in every instance, in which the will of man came in competition with the will of God. If the spirit of christianity be such a trimmer, how do you acquit the Apostles of folly, in suffering so much persecution; and in dying on crosses and gibbets? We know why they were persecuted, and why they died martyrs. Wherever they saw sin, they would call it by its own name; and wherever they saw a soul in danger of being ruined by it, they would speak out, though suffering, and even death should be the consequence.

IV. To say, that the Apostles said nothing about slavery, is contrary to fact. They preached against it wherever they found it. This is quite susceptible of proof, though not one of their sermons can be produced. What did they preach? This question is answered by deciding another. What did the Saviour send them to preach? They were sent to preach the gospel. More particularly—their commission was, to preach, in his name, repentance and remission of sins. Of what sins did they tell all men in the name of Jesus to repent? For what sins did they tell them they would find remission in the Saviour's blood? Or did they purposely preach these

things so entirely in the gross that their hearers could not possibly understand the particulars? We have heard preachers reproved for preaching against slavery, by reminding them, that they had better preach the gospel—as if preaching the gospel, were preaching unintelligibly; or, as if preaching repentance and pardon for a particular sin, were not preaching the gospel. If the Apostles carefully (or if you please prudently) concealed from those who were guilty of claiming power over the lives and liberties of their fellow men, that they had offended God, and if they never told them there was pardon for them bought with the Saviour's blood, how do you acquit them of the charge of treason against their Master, or of unfaithfulness to the souls of men?

Let us hear the Apostle Paul's account of his own preaching, in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus. After reminding them that he had taught them publickly, and from house to house, testifying, both to Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and after assuring them that they would see his face no more; he adds; "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Are we to be told that when the Apostle made this solemn appeal, the fact was staring him in the face, that in his whole life he had never told a man that he must repent of the sin of enslaving his neighbor; and that in the last day every soul to whom he had preached would rise up and tell him that throughout his whole ministry he had uniformly shunned to declare that part of God's counsel, which relates to the sin of slave-holding, and all that part of his counsel which relates to the pardon of that sin, through the blood of his Son. O Brethren! it is a bad cause which cannot be defended without such "girds" at the Apostles.

V. The Apostles do condemn slavery in their epistles, and in every one of their epistles.

To prove this would be evidently gratuitous, were it not that professors are never more inconsistent, than when advocating this sin. They themselves acknowledge that it is a sin, and of course contrary to the Bible; for none but infidels have the impudence to pretend to know what is contrary to the will of God, without the Bible. They are ready to acknowledge, at any time, that to hold a neighbor in slavery is

sin, and they insist that they are conscientiously opposed to the principle! And they will lament, as long and as loud as you can have patience to hear them, that such an evil should exist among us. If you enquire how they can live in a sin to which they are so conscientiously opposed; they will tell you a great deal about necessity, and their unfortunate situation. But lest their having nothing better than the "*tyrants plea*," should make you question their religion, they will undertake to prove to you from the Bible that it is no sin at all; and of course, so far as religion consists in being conscientious, they have even more of it than the scriptures require. It appears too, that the sole object of their efforts to make the Apostles dumb on the subject of slavery, is to prove by their dumbness, that to live in what they acknowledge to be a sin, is really no sin. They are willing to be shamefully inconsistent with themselves, they are willing that the Apostles should be like those watchmen whom the Prophet Isaiah styles dumb dogs that cannot bark; they are willing to risk the consequence of dying without repentance, and without asking forgiveness of an acknowledged sin; but they are not willing to part with their slaves.*

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* To appeal to the law of Moses to justify slavery, as it exists among us, betrays either great ignorance of that law, or great want of common honesty. The term slave, is not found in the Old Testament, excepting, in Jer. 2. 14. and there it is a mere *supplement* inserted by the translators. It is useless to labor, as some have done, to prove that the lust for slaveholding did exist in Israel; and that they sometimes deprived their neighbors of their just freedom. The very threatenings of God's wrath, on account of that sin, sufficiently establishes the fact. But, to make the wickedness of the church the interpreter of the Bible, or the rule of our faith, is setting up a worse pope than the one at Rome. By attending to Lev. 25 and Deut. 15, &c., we may ascertain what kind of servitude the law allowed in Israel. It appears from these, and other passages, to have been common, both for Israelites and Heathens, to become poor, and to be sold. But there was to be a great difference between them. The Hebrew servants must not be ruled with rigour; that is, they must not be put to drudgery or menial offices. They must be as companions in the family; or as hired servants, or sojourners. They must

We say the Apostles do condemn slavery, in every one of their epistles. But let us settle a question. Are we to expect in their writings an express prohibition of every thing

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not serve more than six years: In the seventh year, and in the year of jubilee, they must go out free, liberally furnished by their Masters. But the bond servant, from the heathen might be made to serve with rigour—He might be sold or inherited, as any possession or property; and he must serve until the year of jubilee. But how are we to understand (Lev. 25. 46,) "they shall be your bond-men forever." All, except Universalists, understand forever, as a definite term, whether it mean eternity, or a limited portion of time. If it be here used to define the duration of this statute, it means the whole of the Jewish dispensation; but if it define the length of the bond-man's service, it means the period of servitude which the law of Moses prescribed (viz) fifty years; or from one jubilee to another. That the year of jubilee, cleared the land of every thing like bondage, will be admitted, by every one who is not the dupe of a theory, or something worse. "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man to his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family," (Lev. 25. 10.) It was required (Isa. 5. 6.) that all bonds of wickedness should be loosed, and that the heavy burdens should be undone, that the oppressed should go free, and that every yoke should be broken. This jubilee which commenced on the day of atonement, was the type of that acceptable year of the Lord, which was to be ushered in, by the Mesiah's great atonement, when the gospel was to be preached to every creature, proclaiming spiritual liberty to all the captives of sin, and the opening of the prison doors to all that were bound. It is not strange that the Old Testament abounds with threatenings against those who would not when they heard the sound of the jubilee trumpet, break every yoke. Such men were doing what they could to make the jubilee a false type, of the gospel jubilee. They were holding up to the world a heresy in regard to the merit of Mesiah's atonement, and the extent to which salvation should be offered to sinners.

There was another regulation which prevented the land of Canaan from wearing the gloom of a land of bondage. The

which is sinful, in all circumstances? A child can answer such a question. A child knows that a Bible written in such a way, would be useless. A thousand volumes would

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law of circumcisión and the passover, required of the Israelites, that the man bought with money should be admitted to the ordinances; unless, perhaps, he refused or was somehow disqualified. In that case, he was cut off from the congregation of Israel. A man who became a proselyte of righteousness, by admission to these ordinances was to all intents and purposes an Israelite. He was a child of Abraham; a servant of the living God and an heir of the promises.

It is to this change in the condition of a heathen, that allusion is made by the term adoption, which like most technical terms in the New Testament, is Jewish in its origin, and is to be explained by a reference to the law and customs of Moses. Whenever the bondman was proselyted, he was entitled to all the privileges of a Hebrew servant. The Apostle (Rom. c. 8. v. 15) seems to compare the case of christians, who go back to the law for justification, to that of a proselyted servant, who by apostacy from the religion of Abraham, is thrown back into the state of a bondman. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Thus it appears, that excepting when persevering enmity to the God of Israel kept the bondman in bondage, a bondman according to the law of Israel was rarely seen; a slave never.

It would often be amusing, if it excited no feelings inconsistent with amusement, to hear one who is a slave-holder from covetousness, appeal to the Jewish law. When you introduce the subject of slavery, he will assure you, that "there is no difference between us as to *principle*." If you insist that there is considerable difference, at least, as to practice, he will remind you that slavery is a very *delicate* subject,—one on which it is not prudent to talk much. If you contend that it is not more imprudent to talk about a thing than to practice it every day, he will quote Lev. 25, 46, as the charter under which he holds his slaves; and perhaps remind you that this is that ancient law, under which David, and some of the best of men lived, and perhaps inform you, that it was veneration for that ancient law, which induced him to practice somewhat differently from that principle, in our venerated declaration of independence, [viz:] "that all men

comprise but a small part of it. And yet invariably when nominal professors and lawless men undertake to fight for their lusts, they endeavor to take shelter under the letter of the law. The horse-racer, and cock-fighter, and gamester, and card-player, and frequenter of theatres, and ball-rooms, will challenge you to produce the text where his favorite amusement is condemned. And if it be true that slave-holding is not condemned by the Apostles, because you cannot produce the text where it is said: "Thou shalt not enslave thy neighbor;" upon the same principle, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and gambling in all its forms, and attending theatres, and ball-rooms, and a host of other vices, must be put down on the list of things not forbidden in the Bible. A moment's attention to the nature and design of the epistles of the New Testament, will show us what kind of testimony we are to expect to find on this or any other subject. The object of the Apostles, in these writings, was to exhibit clearly to all sinners, the way of salvation, and to furnish all christians and churches with a summary of their faith and duties, till the Lord shall come. They give us general principles, by the particular application of which, we are to know what is sin or duty in all the circumstances in which we may be placed. They leave the particular application of these general principles, for the reproof of any heresies, or immoralities which may arise in any age, to the standing ministry, and to all whose duty it may be to read or expound the scriptures. They give us set discourses on those sins which divided chris-

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are born equally free." Ask him how he can live in the neglect of circumcision and the passover, and he will tell you that these things belonged to the law of Moses, and that law is abrogated. Ask him why the baptism of slaves produces no change in their situation; contrary to the spirit of the Jewish law, and why they are never gladdened with the sound of the jubilee trumpet? He will tell you again, with considerable surpirze at your ignorance, that these things belonged to the law of Moses, and that law was abrogated long ago. If you inquire, how then, as an honest man, he can appeal to an abrogated law for authority to hold his fellow men in slavery? He will tell you with some warmth, that his slaves cost him money, and that they are his property by the laws of the land, and no man shall take them from him. Thus when the ostensible reason fails, you will get the true one.

tians, and disturbed the churches in their day—such as eating meat offered to idols. They often dwell on those which are the besetting sins of christians, such as self-righteousness, and unbelief, and worldly mindedness. But those sins which are plainly condemned by the general principles which they have furnished; those which all christians in their time abhorred, and which were not permitted in the church even for an hour,—such sins as man-stealing, lying, and purjury, are not even named except when they had occasion to name them as things abhorred.

The question then on this subject is this: Is there any principle laid down by the Apostles, which slave-holding violates? Is there any text, which when fairly applied, condemns it? Is there any passage, which impliedly forbids it, and from which its sinfulness can be fairly inferred? Our Lord himself has taught us that it is in this way, we are to learn some of the most important truths in the Bible. The Sadducees, the free-thinkers of their day; who professed to believe the five books of Moses, took precisely the ground, of the advocates of slavery. Because Moses had not said, in so many words, "the dead shall be raised," and because he had not left behind him any written dissertation on the subject, they maintained, that either he considered the resurrection a matter of no importance, and prudently said nothing about it; or, like themselves, he was a free-thinker. And so confident were they, of the safety of the position they had taken, that they had the impudence to confront our Lord. Our Saviour quotes to them the passage in the writings of Moses, where it is said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and, as a man who denies a doctrine that is plainly implied, or fairly inferred from the scriptures, is as really an infidel as he who denies that which is written; he charges them with ignorance of the scriptures, and holding an error, which is contrary to them. Is there any passage then in the writings of the Apostles, in which we are taught to love our neighbor as ourselves?—to do to all men as we would that they should do unto us?—to do good unto all men?—to be followers of Christ?—to be holy in all manner of conversation, as he who hath called us is holy? &c. &c. Is there any child of five years old, whose intellect is so feeble, that it cannot perceive in these texts, and a hundred such passages, any thing inconsistent with slave-holding? And is there any

minister of the gospel who has made himself such a master in the art of handling the word of God deceitfully, that he will undertake to show that such texts contain nothing which is inconsistent with men's making slaves of one another. The truth is, the difficulty is, not to find texts in which the Apostles condemn this sin, but to find a chapter in any of the epistles in which it is not condemned, either impliedly or by fair inference. This, together with the fact, that there are no set discourses on this sin, and no reproofs for indulging in it, shows the universal abhorrence in which it was held by churches and christians, in primitive times.

The place which the Apostles assign man-stealing, shows that they did class slave-holding with the abominations of that age. We hesitate in making a remark so common, and therefore perhaps, so unnecessary, as that the receiving of things stolen, knowing them to be such, is by the laws of heaven, and the laws of every well regulated society on earth, and the unbiassed judgment of all mankind; considered a partaker with the thief. No honest man will deny, that he who steals a man, and he who receives him at the hands of the thief, and makes him a slave, are partners in guilt, and ought to be partners in punishment. No man, who has not been so long in the habit of trying to deceive his Maker, that he has outwitted his own conscience, will ever imagine that his guilt is the less, because he receives the stolen man, through many hands, from the hands of the thief.

We see then in what light the Apostles view the slave-holder, when they class the man-stealer, (1 Tim. 1. 9, 10.) with the lawless and disobedient, with the ungodly, the unholy and profane, with murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, with defilers of themselves with mankind, with liars and perjured persons.

VI. The Apostles often speak of slave-holders; but they never address them as christians, or members of the church. On the contrary, they treat them with marked abhorrence. When we say that they speak of slave-holders, we do not mean that they wrote in English; but, that they use a term which is fairly translated, *slave-holder*. The Greek word used in (1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. and in Titus 2. 9.) and other places, is Despotes. It is from this, that our English word Despot is derived. The word does not necessarily imply any worse idea than absolute authority. It is used in a good or bad

sense, according to the person to whom it is applied. In a good sense, and with great propriety, it is applied to the Most High, and is translated Lord. (Jude 4. Acts 4. 24. Luke 2. 29.) The Apostles and other pious men use it in their prayers to God, as the Supreme Lord of the Universe, and the Lord of life. In a bad sense, it is applied to men, who usurping the authority of the Almighty, claim power over the lives and liberty of their fellow men, and make them slaves. Hence the term Despot, derived from it, has been from the first, a name of infamy. It is remarkable that this title is never used by the evangelists, as applicable to any one who lived under the law of Moses. The Apostles use it as a title of men, who had grown up amidst the darkness and abominations of paganism, in countries where there was no jubilee, and where there was not even a name for humility or mercy.

We consider it as unfortunate that Despotes is translated Master, (though it can easily be accounted for,) and that therefore, in our English Bible, we have nothing to distinguish the Despot from the Kurios, which is also translated Master, but designates a master of a very different kind. For the sake of distinction, we shall take the liberty of translating the one Despot, and the other Master, in our quotations from the scriptures, and our remarks upon them. That the Despots were slave-holders; even the advocates for slavery will not be disposed to deny. They insist that there were such characters as slave-holders, and they will not insist that they were held in such detestation by the Apostles, that they were never once named. That Kurios, the other word which is translated Master, was not the title of slave-holder is abundantly evident. It is translated in different places Master, Sir, and Lord. It is the title by which the disciples generally address the Saviour; and they were not such reprobates, as to use the word which would insinuate that they considered their situation under him, like that of poor slaves. When the Greeks, who wished to see Jesus, [John 12. 21.] used it, in their address to Philip, they were not so consumately polite as to wish him to consider himself a slave-holder, and themselves as his slaves. The Apostle Peter, when addressing wives, (1 Pet. 3. 6.) on the subject of duty to their husbands, recommends for their imitation, the example of Sarah, who obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, (Kurios.) Even a trader in slaves would not infer from this, that Abraham and all

other husbands were slave-holders, and that Sarah, and all wives were slaves; and that when he is making up a drove of the wives of his neighbors for the market, he may complete it with his own wife. Yet this would be both good logic, and good divinity, if Kurios means slave-holder. Kurios, means Master of an indented, hired, or any voluntary servant.

We have decisive evidence that the Despots were the slave-holders. The Apostle, [1 Tim. 6. 1.] addresses the servants of Despots as slaves, and he addresses the servants of no others, as slaves. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own Despots worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." Servants under the yoke, is the appropriate name of slaves. The allusion is to the manner in which the Romans doomed individuals, and sometimes cities, and even whole provinces, to slavery, by making them to pass under the yoke, the symbol of bondage. If there is any meaning in names, we should suppose that when the term Despot is applied to any creature by inspiration, it would be a sufficient indication of his character, if we heard nothing more about him. But the Apostle [in 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2.] plainly intimates that the Despots were unbelievers; and that when they became believers, it was in the power of the slaves to refuse to do them service, as servants. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own Despots worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, and they that have believing Despots, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather let them do service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." He was anxious that slaves or servants under the yoke, should count their Despots worthy of all honor. In the 4th and 5th verses, he suggests the reason. A different spirit was inculcated by some teachers, "who were proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envies, strifes, revilings, evil surmising, &c." Any one who is familiar with the epistles, recognises in this picture, the Judaizers, those troublers of Israel in those days. These men, had been taught by their Rabbies, that it was a sin for a Jew to serve a Gentile; and among Christians, they were inculcating a similar principle. They taught them to disregard every tie which bound a believer to an unbeliever. The Apostle had some difficulty in persuading believing husbands and wives,

that they ought not to put away their unbelieving partners; and in persuading some professors, that infidelity in their rulers, would not justify rebellion. There were sufficient grounds for fears, then that some pious slaves might be induced to believe that it was inconsistent with the religion of Jesus to honor a vile pagan. It was easy to perceive how the name of God and his doctrine would be blasphemed so soon as it should be known that slaves were making the gospel a plea for rebellion. He therefore urges them not to let any thing in their conduct be the occasion of reproach to the cause of Christ. Now let it be distinctly marked, that the Apostle was apprehensive that all slaves were in the same danger. Why? Because they all had Despots of such a stamp that they might consider it a sin to honor them. They were all unbelievers.

But from the 2d verse it appears that Despots did sometimes believe. He here addresses servants that have believing Despots. That they were a different kind of servants from those under the yoke, is very evident from the fact that they are introduced by the conjunction *de*, improperly translated *and*, instead of *but*. Any Greek scholar knows that the characters introduced by that conjunction are different from those preceding. If *those* in the first place were slaves, *these* were not The object of the Apostle's address is to persuade servants not to take occasion from their Despot's having become brethren, to dispise them, by refusing to do them service as hired servants, or in any other way. He does not enjoin them to do service, nor does he intimate that there was any law which required it: but he advises it *rather*. Being poor, they must serve somebody. The fact, which is obviously implied, is, that so soon as a Despot became a believer and put himself under the care of the church, it was in the power of the slave to despise him, and refuse to serve him in any capacity. It was then in his power to complain to the church, that a man who was now a brother in Christ was robbing him, not of a few dollars, but of that which outweighs all price—his liberty; and was claiming power over his life. Whether, a church under the direction of men, some of whom had been companions of the Son of God, and were full of the Holy Ghost, would sustain a brother in such a plea, and require the usurper to repent, and sin no more, is easily decided. A church that will allow her members to

cheat their neighbour to the amount of a single dollar, is either grossly ignorant or grossly wicked. But the Apostle was apprehensive that slaves in the event of the conversion of their Despots, would act imprudently; that smarting under past injuries, they would, beside, claiming their liberty, insulting refuse to be employed as servants, and thus, not only leave a repenting brother in embarrassed circumstances, and throw themselves out of employment, but, worse than all, manifest an unforgiving spirit, and give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. We make a remark on the phrase, "believing Despots." As this is the only text in which believing, and slave-holding are found in such near connexion, much use will be made of it. We shall be told, that such a phrase as believing Despots, proves that they remained Despots after they believed. Let us apply this principle. The Apostles often speak of Jews which believe, and of Gentiles which believe. Does it follow that they remained Jews, and Gentiles, after they believed? We read that the dumb spake, and the blind saw, and the lame walked. Any one knows, that such phrases are often used to designate at once the person's past and present character. So we use them to this day. We speak of converted gamblers and swearers; but we are never understood, and never wish to be understood, as saying that they swear and gamble after conversion. That no man remained a Despot, after he became a member of the church, is easily proved.

The Apostles never address a Despot as a believer, or member of the church. They frequently address Masters on the subject of christian duties, and tell them how to treat their servants, [Eph. 6. 5. Col. 3. 22. and 4, 1.] They never address their servants without addressing their Masters also. But, though they often address the servants of Despots, they never address the Despots, but as wicked men. How shall we account for this? How shall we account for it, that while they address all classes of believers, magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and particularly notice slaves, there is not a word to pious Despots? There were no such pious men. Such were the views which the Apostle entertained of their characters, that he treats them with marked abhorrence. He never tells them how to manage their slaves for the same reason that he never tells them how to steal! He never undertakes to regulate a wicked thing.

An address to the Despots in any church, would have been as absurd, as an address to the man-stealers in the church. No such men were in the church.

VII. All addresses to servants of Despots which are to be found in the New Testament, either plainly imply, or fairly warrant the inference, that the Despots were irreligious men. In these passages all the tenderness and sympathy of the Apostles appears to be called up. They seem to be bringing into view the most cheering considerations which the gospel furnishes to animate them to perseverance; and to be setting before them in most commanding array those that were calculated to fortify them against permitting themselves to be driven into sin, by any hardships or sufferings. They speak as to men who were in the hands of sworn enemies to the cross of Christ. The Apostle Paul [1. Cor. 7. 20. 24.] decides the question whether a servant, not free, [which in a pagan country like that around Corinth was only another name for a slave,] might be baptised, or admitted to the church? "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant, care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman, likewise he that is called being free, in Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men." In the commencement of the chapter he gives notice, that he will now consider those things of which they had written to him. After deciding that husbands and wives may be admitted though their partners be irreligious; he decides the question respecting servants, by this general principle. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. The Apostle never decides, as a case of conscience, a question with which nobody's conscience was troubled. He takes up these matters as difficulties which had so baffled the collected wisdom of the church of Corinth, that they had written to him for a decision. The fact that under the Old Testament, a husband, or a wife whose partner was a pagan, would not be retained in the communion of the church, made it a question with the Corinthians whether such persons ought to be admitted to the privileges of the Christian church. The same disposition to judaizing embarrassed them with regard to servants not free. Had their Despots been believers, there would have been no difficulty; for the law of Moses

required that the bond servants of Israelites should be circumcised unless they refused. But the situation of a slave, subject to the caprice of a pagan Despot, was a different thing. We cannot but remark that the Apostles and churches appear not to have adopted the polite custom in some slave-holding churches, of refusing to baptise any slave, till he can produce a note from his master and mistress; thus putting his privileges, and so far as outward means are concerned, his hope of salvation, in the hands of persons, who are sometimes avowed enemies to the name of Jesus. Having relieved the church of Corinth from embarrassment by the general principle, that it is only personal irreligion which bars admission to the Christian church, he proceeds to address the servants. For it seems to have been a serious question with them, whether they ought to wish to be baptised. It would be natural for a conscientious slave to reason thus: May I, undertake to follow the Saviour, who have an ungodly Despot, whose commands will often interfere with the commands of God; who not only from covetousness, but from enmity to the cross, will require me to profane the Lord's day, and forbid me to attend the house of God, and, perhaps merely to vex my soul, will require me to attend him to his Idol's temple. The Apostle, as one who could weep with those that weep, tells him not to care for it, that he is a servant; but advises him if thou mayest be free use it rather. He then gives an important reason why he should obtain his freedom if he could. "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise he that is called being free is Christ's servant." The sum is, that every christian whether bond or free, must serve his divine Master. His must be the paramount authority. Aware that such a course would often expose to great suffering, and that the servant might suppose that his hard lot, would justify some deviation from the path of duty, he reminds him that there can be no compromise between Christ and Belial. "Ye are bought with a price, be ye not the servants of men." Considering the Apostle's sympathy for these servants, why does he not say a word to their Despots, about their freedom—or about permitting them to attend the house of God—or, about their having leisure on the Lord's day, to attend to the concerns of their souls. This would be a hard question, on the supposition that any of them had the fear of God. But the answer is

plain; they were the very men who were not christians; and he knew enough of human nature to know that to talk to an ungodly man, whose heart is under the dominion of the slave-holding lust about mercy, would be like making supplications to the wind.

The Apostle Peter manifests the same concern for slaves, and the same abhorrence of their Despots. "Servants be subject to your own Despots, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffitted for your faults ye take it patiently; but if when ye do well, ye suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. . For even hereunto, were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously, &c. (1. Pet. 2. 18–23.) We presume no one will undertake to find christians under the naked title, good and gentle Despots. Good is used simply to express benevolence. It is used to express the benevolence of Barnabas, and other believers, but it is in connexion with other phrases employed to show that they were believers. The good and gentle Despots are here distinguished from the froward; whose characters and spirit are impliedly portrayed in this passage. Compared with the latter, the former might be gentle, good slave-holders, and yet wretches as regards religion.

If this address of the Apostle was appropriate, we see what was the lot of pious slaves. When we think of what christians endured in primitive times, we generally think of only what they suffered, who were brought before Kings and Rulers. We seldom reflect on what christian slaves endured every day, from the hands of Despots, who had power over their lives and liberties, and were giving vent to their enmity to Jesus by tormenting those who wore his image. We read and talk a great deal about the sufferings of missionaries in heathen countries now, but we seldom think seriously on the condition of pious slaves but a few hundred miles from our homes, in countries where the laws of the land make it penal, publicly to instruct them, or their wives, or their little ones, where they cannot without danger of receiving many lashes

on their bare backs be caught at the place where they may hear the way of salvation; and where many professed christians, and some ministers, as unblushingly as if they had stricken covenant with hell, will tell you by their conduct, if not with their lips, that it would be improper to give them the Bible. But the Apostle, like one who was in the habit of thinking of, and sympathizing with his brethren, who were in slavery, addresses them more particularly than any other class of christians—as those who now had to endure the very brunt of the sufferings of the times for Christ's sake—as people who were buffeted, and suffering wrongfully, and enduring grief for well doing, and for conscience toward God. Like one who was trembling for the issue of their christian warfare, he urges them to perseverance by reminding them of what Jesus endured for them when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He tells them they must walk in the foot steps of him whom no persecution could drive into sin. To shew them how they must bear evil treatment, he sets before them the last scene of the Saviour's sufferings. "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously." This according to an inspired Apostle, must be the spirit of a christian slave. But, there are those who will tell us the Apostles were too prudent to manifest much of this spirit themselves, that they would risk letting their hearers go down to hell by thousands, rather than displease any one by telling him to repent of enslaving his neighbor. The truth is, the slave-holding spirit is a fiend like spirit. It can trample on the authority and laws of God, and trample under foot, the rights of man, and stab the character of the Apostles, when their example rebukes it, and sneer at the littleness of the man who is less daring; and in the mean time, talk about liberty and religion and conscience, and the example of the holy Apostles. How does it come to pass, that the Apostle divides despots into only two classes, those who are good, and gentle, and those who were froward. Why does he not give the pious slave-holder, a word of exhortation and instruction? He did not believe there were such men on earth. The man who can get along pleasantly to himself in the exposition of the epistles, and maintain that the Apostles manifested no disapprobation of the sin of slave-holding, or that they received into the church, those who were living in this sin, must be possessed of some qualities which no wise and honest man will envy.

No man, who carefully and prayerfully examines the scriptures (which are the only rule of our faith and practice) will hesitate to say that he who buys or sells, or, for the sake of gain holds a slave, is guilty of a heinous sin and scandal of which the judicatories of the church ought to take cognizance. We entreat you brethren to regard no authority on this, or any other question of faith and duty, but the authority of God's word. As to the decision of any Theologian, or moral Philosopher, who by some theological or philosophical process, will undertake to decide what God ought to say, instead of shewing what he has said in his word; to treat such decisions with contempt, is a duty which God requires. Our Lord peremptorily demands of all his followers, that they call no man Master, that they remember that they have one Master who is in Heaven—that they search the scripture daily.

That the sin of slave-holding should get into the church, and that it should long hold a place there, under the pretence of Apostolick patronage, is neither a new thing under the sun, nor a thing for which it is difficult to account. It only proves with what facility any sentiment can gain admittance into the creeds of men, provided it will smile on their covetousness. The church has in every age looked back with amazement and grief, on something in the preceding age, which, though it passed for christian, was contrary both to the letter and the spirit of the gospel. Long before the millenium is over, and perhaps long before it arrives, it will be matter of astonishment, that the Americans, who more loudly than any other people on earth, asserted that liberty was the unalienable right of man, and that all men by nature are, and of right ought to be free, and maintained this position at the hazzard of their lives; and at the expense of much blood and treasure; notwithstanding this, held millions of their fellow men in the most abject and cruel slavery. But will it not make the ears of them that hear it tingle, that christians themselves were at the head of this iniquity? That they quieted the scruples and fears of the world around them, by maintaining from the scriptures, that it was not contrary to the will of God the Saviour. Will not their very souls sicken, when they hear that one of the last things which many aged christians did, on earth, was to strengthen themselves to sit up in their death-bed to write the names of those who were to succeed them in keeping in slavery a number of their fellow men;

with their wives and their children; many of whom were bought with their Saviour's blood, and were his sincere and humble followers. Will they not be utterly confounded when they learn that many professors did this with a steady hand, at the moment when they knew they were about to step into the immediate presence of God their judge.

We feel, brethren, that we have sinned in so long holding our peace on this subject. It is, we trust, with sincere sorrow for our past neglect, that we have resolved that in deciding on all future applications for privileges, and in the exercise of discipline, as regards those who are already in our communion, we will consider the buying, or selling, or holding a slave for the sake of gain, a heinous sin and scandal. We calculate as matter of course on hearing objections. The sin of slave-holding having been a long time in the church undisturbed, any attempt to dislodge it, will meet opposition. The enemy of souls will be roused. Worldly professors, like the craft at Ephesus, will be alarmed, and sincere christians, simply because their old habits are shocked, will for a time join in the opposition. Like men just waking out of a dream, they will make objections which they themselves do not understand, and which after a little reflection, they will find to be so foolish, or so wicked, that they will be ashamed that they ever uttered them. We shall hear, that to take cognizance of this sin, would be tyrannical—it would injure professing slave-holders—it would injure the church—it would injure the poor slaves—it would injure the country.

I. We should not be surprised to hear the course in question represented as tyrannical. The cry of tyranny is just as old as oppositon to the exercise of discipline. One of Satan's favorite plans for preventing the church from using the means which the Saviour has put into her hands for delivering the soul of a fallen brother from his grasp, is, to frighten her with the cry of tyranny, or to shame her by raising the cry of mercy. It is deeply to be lamented too, that professors often become his tools in the work of opposition. By mysterious silence, or by whispers of tyranny, they often pursue the very course they would have pursued, had they taken a vow to use their influence in hardening their offending brother, or in dragging him down to destruction. We perhaps shall be asked —Is it not a credible profession of faith in the Saviour, which entitles a man to privileges in the church? And is it not a

tyrannical exercise of discipline to exclude a man because owing to the weakness of his faith, he is conscientious as to some things which you percieve to be contrary to the scriptures? All this may be true, but it is nothing to the purpose. It will be time enough to talk of this, when we meet a man who is a slave-holder, not for the sake of gain, but for conscience sake. Will any man say that he is conscientiously covetous, that it is his conscience which prompts him to rob his neighbors of their rights—and that his conscience will not permit him to abandon a sin, greater than sins for which hundreds have been hanged? On this subject, we have nothing to do, with weak brethren and tender consciences. The simple enquiry now is, whether the legitimate and proper exercise of discipline, to bring a professor to repentance of a sin, in which he lives, for the sake of gain, is tyrannical. That it should be so represented, and that efforts should be made to counteract its influence in every case where a soul is at stake, is not strange. Satan will not easily give up his prey, and the corruptions of christians will often enlist zealously on his side. But accounting for a thing, does not diminish its criminality. Will you say, that the means which the Lord Jesus has given, which he has commanded his church to use, and which he has promised to bless, for gaining offending brethren, are tyrannical and cruel? Is it merciful, when you see your neighbor's house on fire, to look quietly on, till he and his family are consumed? And is it still more merciful, when you see him in danger of hell fire, not to say a word to alarm him? Is it unfeeling to tell him, he offends God—that he ought to repent of his sin, and that through the intercessions of Jesus, there is pardon for him. Was it cruel in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 5. 5.) to direct by the Apostle Paul, that when the offender resists all other means, he should, as a last resort, be shut out from the communion of the church, not for the destruction of the soul, but for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus?

II. It is difficult to see how taking cognizance of the sin of slave-holding, will injure slave-holding professors. Will it injure them, to save them from sin, and the second death? Or are you afraid, that rather than part with their slaves, they will abandon the means of grace, and perish in their sin? Suppose this should be the result—Has the Lord Jesus authorised you to compromise with their lusts? Has he empow-

ered you to hire them to keep their places in the church, and to keep them in good humour, by permission to make slaves of their brethren? The accusation was once falsely brought by the father of lies, against a pious man, that if his maker would put forth his hand and touch his property, he would curse him to his face. Should this be true of any slave-holder, keeping him in the church, would neither do him nor the church any good. If it be true, that the slave-holding lust has taken such possession of his heart, that rather than abandon his sin, he will abandon the house of God, it is high time that something should be done, and no change can be for the worse. Excluding him from the communion is the very means which the Lord has commanded us to use for the salvation of his soul.

But it will be said, the course in question, will injure men in their property. The wealth of many consists in their slaves, and if they must give them their freedom, the masters will be reduced to poverty. It will require a good deal of the deceitfulness of sin, to enable a professor to use so frightful an excuse—For it is neither more nor less than this—I cannot afford to quit sinning against God. Were it consistent with christianity, to live in sin for the sake of wealth, or any worldly interest, the christian religion would never have been hated or persecuted—Christian churches in every land would have been crowded. But the doctrine which the Saviour preached, was, that the sinner must renounce his sins, though it should be like plucking out his right eye, or cutting off his right hand, or be cast into hell fire. The doctrine of the Bible throughout is, that rather than live in a known sin, he must take cheerfully the spoiling of all his goods; and not count even his life dear to him. This thousands of christians have done, and this every real christian will do. There is not a worse heresy on earth, than that a man may serve the Devil, when serving God would be inconvenient, or expensive.

III. We are told that taking notice of the sin of slave-holding, will injure the church—will drive many members out of it, and prevent many from coming in. This is just the old cry, with which the Sadducees and Pharisees thought to frighten John the Baptist. He must quit this rigidness in requiring repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, or the children of Abraham will not be baptized, and then what will the Lord do for a people to serve him. He tells them the Lord

could convert stones into penitent children of Abraham, and would do it before a generation of vipers should be baptized without a change. Such an argument is an appeal to that pitiful thirst for numbers, which is both scandalous and ruinous wherever it is cherished. We presume that no christian knows what he is saying, when he tells us that the proper exercise of discipline for the putting away of any sin, will injure the church.

IV. A favorite apology among slave-holders is, "It will injure the poor Africans, to give them freedom. They are so ignorant and depraved, that they could not take care of themselves; and the white people would cheat them, and they would become a nuisance in society." It is thus that some profes sors can dress out their profitable sins in such style that they themselves almost believe them christian virtues. This and many other apologies of the same stamp, every body has heard. They are just as old, as the lust for slave-holding; does any slave-holder himself believe, that it is from the pure principle of benevolence to the Africans that he holds them in bondage? Is it because he cannot think of their coming to poverty and hunger and nakedness, that he cannot let them go? The manner in which they are fed and clothed and treated, would in most cases answer this question. The simple fact that they will let no other man take charge of them without some hundreds of dollars per head, shews that there is not a word of truth in it, and that they themselves do not believe it.

V. When men object to the church's taking cognizance of the sin of slave-holding, on the ground that the slaves are so ignorant and depraved, that they cannot be freed without ruining the country, they are only giving us another proof of the deceitfulness of sin. It is a hollow attempt to make their covetousness pass for patriotism. We would say in reply to this shocking apology, that to talk of injuring the country by obeying God, or serving the country by provoking him to wrath, is horrible. There is too much truth in the assertion, that a large portion of the slaves are ignorant and depraved. An instance of a slave-holder who holds many slaves, teaching them to read and understand the Bible, praying with and for them, and in a word, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, perhaps this continent cannot produce. Generally they are permitted to grow up as ignorant as their master's cattle. But will slave-holders, plead their

own wickedness, as a reason why you should recognise them as christians, and lay aside the exercise of discipline. Will they tell you that in a christian land, and under the light of the gospel, and in the midst of the means of salvation, they are not only holding a number of immortal beings in bondage, but systematically keeping them in such ignorance and depravity, that it requires the strong arm of a tyrant to keep them from being nuisances, or fire brands in society? And is it thus they would satisfy you, that their names should be continued or enrolled as the followers of Jesus. It alters the matter but little to tell us that it is impossible for a slave-holder to instruct and train his slaves to habits of virtue; for this is telling us that the slave-holding system is in itself a system of iniquity, and that it necessarily involves the ruin of the souls that come under its influence; and that therefore every slave-holder is living in habitual co-operation with the Devil.

We know that in regard to many slaves this statement of what would be the result of their freedom is slanderous. In spite of the negligence and examples of their masters, and in spite of the slave-holding system many hundreds of them are pious and exemplary. But it would be strange indeed if after being reared in ignorance and with a wretched example before them, the execution of the laws of the land would not be necessary to keep many of them in order. They would have made but little use of their master's example if they would not consider themselves at liberty to kidnap their neighbor's children and make them slaves. They would have but little sense if they could not perceive that to rob a neighbour of a few dollars, is at least as harmless as to rob him of his liberty. They would possess but little of the art of deceit and but little talent for mimickry, if they could not tell their honest neighbors that there was no difference between them in *principle*, and talk about their *consciences* and lament their *necessity* and unfortunate situation. But there is one consideration which should remove the fears of slave-holders—when black men talk and act in this way the laws of the land will hang them; or should they escape the gallows, they will not propose themselves as candidates for membership in the church till they reform. To corrupt the Africans by our example, and degrade them by slavery, and then plead their degradation as a reason why they should never taste liberty, is not only sinful, but superlatively mean.

How does it come that slave-holders do not feel themselves bound to take charge of every ignorant and depraved man they meet? Does care for the Africans expend their stock of benevolence and patriotism? There is one fact which shows that all these pretences to regard for society and "our country," originate in covetousness and sheer hypocrisy. Should any slave attempt to make his escape to some land of freedom where he will never trouble his master's country or even the United States, he will be pursued immediately with advertisements of large rewards to any one who will seize and return him, or confine him in a jail.

But Brethren—Though we have thus noticed some of the common objections to taking cognizance of the sin of slave-holding, or rather some of the apologies for that sin itself, we entreat you to remember that all apologies for disobedience to God are wicked. If slave-holding is a transgression of the will of God, any plea for continuing in it, is neither more nor less than a plea in behalf of serving the Devil rather than the Holy One.

The Apostle Paul in his epistle to Titus, (chap. 2. 9, 10.) charges him to instruct and comfort slaves, and tells him what to say to them; but only names their despots. "Exhort servants to be obedient to their own despots, and to please them well in all things, not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men &c." In the addresses of the Apostles to servants of Masters, and those to servants of despots, there is a striking difference. For the lot of the latter is every where supposed to be that of temptation, and cruel suffering. He here supposed that they would be tempted to fretful and hasty replies, and hard pinched as to food and clothing, and often tempted to relieve themselves by purloining from the plenty of their lordly tyrants, and probably many christians much wiser than they, would suppose that they might do so without sin. But besides the sin of so doing, their despots would say, the gospel made them thieves. Much therefore as he sympathized with them, he urges them to perseverance, in exhibiting the christian spirit through all hardships, and in the close of the chapter, he directs them for comfort, "to that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ." We ask once more,

how does it come to pass, that while we see the Apostles in their epistles visiting the abodes of the poor slaves, sympathizing with them in their sufferings, and cheering them in their discouragements, and telling them how to live, that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour; we never see them spending an hour with the slave-holder? The slave-holders were enemies to religion, and appear to have been men who were scarcely on speaking terms with the Apostles.

When an inspired Apostle addresses men who live in the slave-holder's sin—on the labours of those who are not paid for their services, he addresses them, not as christians, but as men who are living in other flagrant sins, and as men who are going fast to hell. The Apostle James (chap. v. 1. 6.) addresses them, as a man standing at a distance would call out to an enemy whom it was scarcely safe to approach, or as a man who is knocking at a neighbor's house at midnight, would address him to tell him that his house was on fire. "Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted. Your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped together treasures for the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, have entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and have been wanton. Ye have nourished your heart as in the day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." Is it not strange that all the rich men at that time are addressed as wicked, and going to destruction.

We must recollect that "not many rich were called;" and few, indeed, if any continued *rich* among the followers of Christ. Though the practice of selling all their possessions and laying their prices at the Apostles feet did not long continue, the spirit of it outlived the Apostles themselves. With such liberality did they contribute of what they had, to support the poor, and for the purpose of sending the gospel among all nations; and so soon was the rich christian stripped by the harpies of persecution, that there were comparatively none in the church, who had wealth lying by them in such store that they could be called rich. We must recollect that in all countries where slavery prevails, the rich, who are ungodly,

are always slaveholders. Hence the rich were distinguished by three features. Instead of contributing to the cause of God, their riches were rotting—they were living in the slaveholders sin, on the labours of men whose cries were ascending up to heaven,—and they were persecuting and killing the just. No wonder that the Apostle (Chap. 2. 1-7.) forbids any distinguishing marks of respect to men who would come into their Christian assemblies, shining in their gold rings and goodly apparel, with three such hateful features in their faces as those of a robber of God and a robber of men, and a persecutor of religion. He forbids them to say to such, sit thou here in a good place, while they would say to the poor man, who notwithstanding his mean clothing, was rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom, stand thou there, or sit under my foot stool. He forbids this, as a respect of persons which would be most offensive in the sight of God; and forbids it on this ground—"Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seat? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called." He must have an unusual stock of assurance who will tell us that one of those features above mentioned was to be seen in the faces of the men whom the Apostles recognized as sincere christians. And he must have a large share of utter ignorance or moral turpitude who will tell us he is walking precisely in the footsteps of the Apostle James when he receives into the church men who are thriving on the labours of those whose hire is kept back by fraud and whose cries are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. To avoid the occasion of cavilling, we leave to others to say whether in the times of the Apostles the men who robbed God—and the slave holders, and the persecutors, and the blasphemers of the worthy name, were not the same men. But this we will say, when an inspired apostle sets himself to catch the features of men who are hurrying to perdition that he may hold up their frightful picture to all the world; their most prominent feature is that of the slave-holder.

The very head and front of their offending is rioting on the labours of men who are defrauded of their hire, and have none to whom they can tell their sorrows but the Lord of sabaoth. He calls upon such men to begin their howling now, for their everlasting weeping and howling would soon begin. And must we still be told that the Apostles tolerated the sin of slave-holding in the church, and prudently said nothing about

it? That we may believe this must common sense be a sin?—And must we not believe the testimony of our own senses when we read the Scriptures? Or must we eventually take the summary plan—take the knife to every stubborn text that will give unpleasant testimony.

Brethren, if any of you are guilty of this sin, as those who are set to watch for your souls we call upon you to repent. Yours is no venial sin. The fatherless and the widow, and the poor man and the stranger are characters whom the Lord has pledged himself to protect. And he has assured us in the strongest terms, that no man shall oppress, or impose upon them with impunity. Defrauding them of their just dues, and oppression in every form, are forbidden by such considerations as these. "Lest they cry against thee unto the Lord and it be sin against thee." "It shall come to pass that when he crieth unto me I will hear for I am gracious." "If they shall cry unto me I will surely hear their cry and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." "The Lord your God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, a great and a mighty, and a terrible, who regardeth not persons nor taketh a reward, he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment." Thus saith the Lord "ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every one to his neighbor." "Behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, and to the pestilence and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth." Be assured Brethren, when the Lord speaks he means the very thing which he says: and that which he has said is the thing which he will do. How soon he will say of the oppressed Africans in our land; I have surely seen their affliction, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows and have come down to deliver them—We know not. But this you know, you must soon appear before him to give your final account. Are you willing to meet him in this sin unrepented of? Are you willing that your children after you, influenced by your example, should live and die in their sin? Do not ask what can be done with our slaves? The very thing which the Lord commands you to do is, to let the oppressed go free. Do not persuade yourself that you must die a slave-holder from pat-

riotism or benevolence. Calling a sin by a good name will neither diminish its guilt nor blind the eyes of the omnicient God. But brethren, it may be that you are not slaveholders and never were. This does not, however, settle the question, whether you have in the sight of God any guilt in this matter. One reason why the sins of a few individuals are sometimes visited with chastisement on the whole land or community is, the individuals composing that community did not use their influence to bring the transgressor, to repentance, and shame their sins from society; and hence they are partakers with them both in the guilt and the punishment. If all who never bought nor sold a man, nor ever held one in bondage had done their duty, that sin would long ago have been banished from the church, if not from the world. But there is a great deal of professed hatred of shave-holding, which is little else than hatred of the Africans. Such hatred of slavery is accompanied with as little effort to meliorate the condition of the Africans as to bring the slave-holders to repentance. Let no one suppose that this is a concern of none but the officers and judicatories of the church. Affectionately to admonish sinners—to pray for them—to endeavor to bring them to repentance and the knowledge of the truth—to pray daily for the blessing of God upon all the means which he has given for that purpose—to delight in promoting the temporal and eternal welfare of all our fellowmen, is the business of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the exhortation which he has addressed to all his servants. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Exhort one another daily while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Brethren if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins.